

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

UNIT: School of Education

DEPT: Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations

COURSE SYLLABUS

1. **Course Prefix and Number:** ELC 664
2. **Course Title:** Foundations of Interpretive Inquiry
3. **Credits:** 3.0
4. **Course Prerequisites/Corequisites:** ELC 593, 696 or 697; ERM 617 or their equivalents
5. **For Whom Planned:** Required course for the Ph.D. in Cultural Foundations.
6. **Instructor Information:** Office numbers, office hours, phone numbers, and email address should be listed

Instructor: Prof. Svi Shapiro

Office: Curry 229 (by appointment); Tel.: 334-3466; e-mail: sshapiro@bellsouth.net

7. **Course Purpose/Catalog Description:** Theoretical and philosophical dimensions of interpretive inquiry in education; concepts that are the foundation for qualitative methodologies in educational research.

8. **Teachers Academy Conceptual Framework Mission Statement:** *The mission of professional education at UNCG is to prepare and support the professional development of caring, collaborative, and competent educators who work in diverse settings. This mission is carried out in an environment that nurtures the active engagement of all participants, values individual as well as cultural diversity and recognizes the importance of reflection and integration of theory and practice. UNCG's professional education programs are guided by shared commitments to: (a) equity and excellence in teaching, research, and service; (b) professional integrity and ethical deliberation in dealing with students and colleagues (university-based, school-based, and community-based); (c) the construction of a professional knowledge base through collaboration and collegiality; and (d) the dissemination of professional knowledge, skills and dispositions through the preparation and continuing professional development of teachers, principals and other school personnel.*

9. **Course Goals and/or Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes:** Instructor's statement of learning outcomes OR goals/objectives from state or national professional standards (please identify the organization, e.g. DPI, CEC, etc.)

This course will provide an introduction to the theory and methods of interpretive research and inquiry. It will situate such methods in the growing crisis of positivist forms of knowledge and understanding, and the development of alternative post-positivist methodologies. Within this understanding, and the development of alternative post-positivist methodologies. Within this context we will look at the influence of postmodern and critical perspectives on social and educational research. We will consider the relationship between experience and meaning; tacit and common sense knowledge; the role of language and discourse in the 'construction' of our

world; the 'hermeneutics of suspicion'; ideological critique and critical consciousness. We will be interested in the ways our own subjectivities are shaped by language, ideology and culture. The course will explore issues of validity, generalizability and objectivity, and the effects of human interests in the production of knowledge. We will look at the significance of the phenomenological perspective in interpretive inquiry, and Marxist theories of culture and consciousness in ethnographic research. And we will consider the challenge of feminist epistemology to the dominant ways of knowing and acquiring knowledge.

It is intended that the class provide both a theoretical and practical starting point for those students considering the use of non-positivist modes of research in their dissertations or theses. A significant dimension of the course will involve students' own research exercises and project. These, it is hoped, will offer the opportunity for pilot studies of culture and consciousness in areas of student's own choosing and interest.

10. Teaching Strategies: For example, lecture, class discussion, group work, conferences, student presentations, electronic chat room, etc.

11. Evaluation Methods and Guidelines for Assignments: Statement of how students will be evaluated in the course and/or list of course requirements

- Careful attention to assigned readings (made weekly). Participation in classroom seminar.
- Completion of assigned written exercises.
- Completion of a research project-and presentation of results in class

Given the scope and demands of this last item-the research project--ample time will be provided both in and out of class to ensure its completion.

12. Required Text(s)/Readings/References: Use full citations

Readings are available from the UNCG library on e-reserves

13. Topical Outline: This might also be your calendar. The course outline should contain sufficient detail to permit assessment of agreement between actual content and stated objectives and catalog description.

Themes

1. Overview of course; origins of an alternative research methodology
2. Science in crisis; the post-modern world view
3. Positivist social science; the dominance of a paradigm
4. The limits of nomothetic research; the hermeneutic alternative
5. Experience and meaning; intentionality and existential knowing
6. The interpretation of experience and the social construction of reality; the objectification of the world

7. Language, discourse, culture; the politics of 'naming' the world
8. Truth and objectivity; the myth of value-neutrality
9. Abstracted empiricism; the reification of human experience
10. Tacit knowledge; knowing more than we can say
11. A materialist philosophy of knowing; the dialectic of being and consciousness
12. Positioning the self; the making of an autobiography
13. The world-taken for granted; the life-world and the estrangement effect
14. Phenomenological inquiry; "back to the things themselves"
15. The 'hermeneutics of suspicion'; Marx, Freud and false consciousness
16. Gramsci and hegemony; common sense and critical consciousness
17. Research and human interests; Habermas and critical inquiry -research as praxis .
18. The Hermeneutic Circle; interpretation and tacit knowing
19. Interviewing and the practice of interpretive inquiry
20. Analyzing the narrative of interviews; making sense of the material
21. Generalizability and validity; measuring truth in new ways
22. Modes of interpretive inquiry; examples (presentations) of research projects

14. Other Information: Any other items you normally include on your course syllabus such as Academic Honor Code, Attendance Policy, Additional Requirements, etc.

15. Recommended Text(s) and/or Readings: A bibliography or list of references highlighting recent scholarship (pedagogy and research) in the subject area

16. Alignment with State and National Standards: Attach a matrix aligning the course goals/objectives with INTASC and/or NBPTS, DPI guidelines or competencies, standards of your professional organization (CEC, NCTM, NCTE, NCSS, NASD, etc.). See the CUI 553 matrix as an example. **If these were included as part of the course goals/objectives listed #9, you do not have to repeat them in a matrix.**